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WHAT IS A HOMŒOPATH ?

To the uninitiated such a question would seem, and very naturally so, a most unnecessary question, and one that, if asked, would be very easy to answer. But it is curious to watch the phases of "evolution" through which any subject passes in the course of years, and especially curious in regard to the question proposed at the head of this article.

There are, and have been for years, a small section of the homœopathic school, who term themselves Hahnemannians, and who look upon HAHNEMANN as almost inspired, inasmuch as they rigidly adhere, in theory and practice, to every word of the master, and consider that any one who ventures to think that HAHNEMANN can in any one point be improved upon, is unworthy of the term Homœopath. Into this question we do not at present enter, and it is not with a view to these gentlemen that we pen the following remarks, but rather with a view to sentiments enunciated at the present day, not only by our opponents of the old school, but even by some of the leading men of our own—men who are among the oldest representatives of homœopathy in this country, and who for years have borne the brunt and heat of the battle.

Up to the last few years there was no difficulty or hesitation on the part of our opponents in answering the question, What is a Homœopath? Any one who admitted that there was any good or truth in the law of similars, or who was known to make use of homœopathic treatment, was at once set down as a homœopath, no doubt being allowed to rest on the point, by his exclusion from general professional intercourse and consultation, and even social intercourse, while his name ceased to appear as a member of any of the well-known medical societies. At this period there was as little hesitation among ourselves as to the meaning of the name. Whoever believed in the truth of the law of similars, even to a partial extent, and practised accordingly, was considered a homœopath, especially if he did so openly and avowedly. He then had little option in this matter, as the attitude of his former friends drove him into making common cause with us, thus enabling him to rivet his convictions by open practice.

But of late years the position of matters has altered. This alteration is due to the increasing way that homœopathy has been making among the ranks of the allopaths. They have begun to find, as we all along knew they would, that there is a great deal more of truth in HAHNEMANN'S law and practice than they had any idea of; they have, month after month, been "discovering" that medicines chosen on the homœopathic principle, whose action can be explained in no other way than by the law of similars, and administered in small doses do cure, and cure better than medicines administered according to old school principles. They have thus begun to see that we are honest, which they did not previously give us credit for being, and as a consequence, as human nature is human nature, the best and most honestly disposed of our opponents look upon us in a more friendly spirit, talk of bases of reconciliation and

reunion of the opposing schools, and propose to alter or abolish the existing trades-union laws which debar us at present from professional fellowship and the membership of the learned societies. They are, however, unwilling to let down their pride so far as to admit that all along we have had the truth on our side, and that they have been acting in a retrograde manner, so far as the interests of science and the progress of medicine are concerned.

We thus find, associated with this commencing friendly feeling, a disposition still to put us so far in the wrong. We are told that by calling ourselves homœopaths, or by accepting this distinctive name which describes our principles of practice, and by calling our journals and societies homœopathic, we are perpetuating the condition of separation and isolation in which we have so long existed, and that thus we prevent all efforts at reconciliation with the majority who do not call themselves by any distinctive name.

By those who thus argue, we are advised to drop the name homœopath, and speak of ourselves simply as physicians. By another section of our opponents, who are not so friendly in their feelings and overtures, we are told that we are not homœopaths at all, and that we retain the name simply for mercenary purposes. The ground of this charge is, that as no one, or very few indeed, restrict themselves so absolutely to treatment by homœopathic medicines as not to make use of auxiliaries which are common to all schools of medicine, such as poultices, fomentations, &c., or to use palliatives in incurable cases, so we are not homœopaths at all. Though we never said—in fact have all along positively refused to say—that we would use nothing but homœopathy, but that, being physicians in the widest sense of the term, we claim our right to do the best for our patient, and for this reason adopted homœopathy in

the vast majority of cases, yet our friends of the old school would fain frame for us an article of creed, and insist on our accepting such at their hands. They would indeed have it understood that any one who deviated by a hair's breadth in the treatment of a patient, from a simple prescription of a homœopathic medicine, was not a homœopath, and was therefore acknowledging a name which gave a false idea of his practice.

Such assumptions give us little thought, as we decline to be dictated to by those who till quite recently have prided themselves on knowing nothing of our tenets or practice. We have over and over again expressed our beliefs and stated freely and openly our mode of practice, and it matters little to us to find ourselves placed in the wrong in some new form. But it is not a little remarkable that a similar view to that we have just noticed is taken up now by some of our oldest and most respected leaders. Similar in one sense, and yet not in another. For while our opponents try to insinuate that when we call ourselves homœopaths, and yet refuse to bind ourselves to the use of nothing but homœopathy, we are dishonest, our friends in our own school take a much higher ground—a ground very similar to that taken up by the more friendly section of the allopaths, who wish for a reconciliation, and yet maintain that it cannot be as long as we retain the distinctive, or as they would call it, the sectarian title.

During the last year, this phase of opinion has been brought prominently forward in our literature, by a certain number of our *confrères*, who have for years been known as among the most able men we have on the side of homœopathy. The name of the London School of Homœopathy was the immediate cause of the advocacy of such opinions. The staunchest of homœopaths themselves, and believing in the ultimate triumph of the truth, they conceived that

the best and largest course to adopt with the view of conciliating the old school, and getting them to adopt the treatment by similars, was to drop the distinctive name from the School, and to remove what is now alleged to be the great cause of offence. These views were, however, not those of the majority of our section of the profession, and the title of the school remains, as at first, the London School of Homœopathy. This subject, which we thought had dropped altogether, has again been revived in another form in our able contemporary, the *British Journal of Homœopathy*. In the last number (for April, 1878) appears an article from the pen of our esteemed friend, Dr. DUDGEON, whose services to homœopathy, and whose zeal for the cause, are surpassed by no one. This article Dr. DUDGEON entitles "Rational Medicine." The gist of his argument is much as follows: The treatment pursued by the old school has, by the often repeated admission of their best men, nothing in it that is settled or definite, that it changes ever and anon according to the change of speculative ideas as to the nature, pathology, and causation of disease, and that therefore it cannot by any means be dignified by the name of rational medicine. We, on the other hand, having the sure basis of our knowledge, in the pure effects of drugs, and in the law of similars, to guide us, are entitled—and are the only practitioners entitled—to call our system rational medicine. But he further argues that, since the nature of many cases which come under one's notice and treatment is such that treatment by drugs at all is sometimes unnecessary, or out of place, as, for example, in curing deafness by the removal of wax from the ear, curing ophthalmia by removing a foreign body which has caused it, curing pains in the feet by forbidding the use of high-heeled boots, &c., &c.; and since we occasionally have to use a dose of castor oil, or of morphia, and sometimes prescribe

in the absence of marked symptoms a medicine which meets our view of the pathology of the case—that therefore we are not homœopaths, and should not accept the name. He argues that we ought to call ourselves rational physicians, and be above any such limited term as homœopath, which should be reserved for those *rare aves* who refuse to draw upon their common sense, but persist in doing nothing in any case but prescribing a supposed homœopathic medicine. We must say that we are at a loss to understand how Dr. DUDGEON can take up such a position. Theoretically it is, of course, very right and proper that we should say—as we are entitled to do—“we are the true representatives of rational medicine, we are rational physicians ;” but practically, with all deference to the experience and wisdom of our able colleague, we think the position quite untenable—at least, in the present relations of the two schools. We all know very well that while there are many points in common between the two schools, they differ in one essential feature. While we have in common with them the liberty and the privilege of using any measures our common sense may suggest in the treatment of cases that require and admit of no drug remedies, and while we claim our right, as we have done all along, to use any treatment which we think may be of most service to our patient, we yet differ from our opponents in the one essential feature, which has been the bone of contention since ever homœopathy was promulgated. This is the treatment of the vast majority of cases which admit of, and require drug remedies, by the administration of medicines chosen according to the laws of similars, and in doses smaller than will cause aggravation. It matters not that we get cases to treat which require no drug medication, or that cases of incurable disease come under our notice that admit of nothing but palliation by

opiates, &c., still the main point remains that in all other cases our treatment differs fundamentally from that of the allopaths, in the one point just noticed. What then is a Homœopath? He is a practitioner who believes that the large majority of cases which require medicines at all are *best* cured by medicines prescribed according to the laws of similars, and who regulates his practice in consonance with this belief. His knowledge of drug-action and of his *Materia Medica* may make him more or less rigid in the application of his principles, but still perfection in this mode of practice is his aim; he gives his patient the benefit of this treatment in the first place, believing that he is thus most honestly carrying out his trust; but he denies him nothing which will be of service to him, although it may not be strictly homœopathic, while if he fails in obtaining the results he anticipates, he will not refuse to adopt any other line of treatment which may hold out a chance of success. But he is still a homœopath. In this practical world there must be—both the public and the profession will have it—a term which in common *parlance* will distinguish the practice of one man from that of another, where they are known to be essentially different. It is of no use to say “We are rational physicians.” The allopaths say the same thing of themselves, and while there is a difference between the two schools, such as exists at present, there must be some distinctive name for indicating in a general way the difference. As soon as the old school see fit to admit openly the truth of the law of similars, to admit that every practitioner may fully and freely employ treatment in accordance with this law, without the fear of ostracism from professional intercourse and from professional honours, *then* there will be no need for any distinctive name. But till that time arrives, as arrive it will, we must not only not accept the name of homœo-

path with a grumble, but stand to it manfully and proudly, as indicating our belief that we are in possession of the greatest truth in medicine ever discovered. We may as much as we like congratulate ourselves on being the true representatives of rational medicine, but still for practical purposes we are homœopaths, and intend to remain such until the allopaths themselves, by the adoption of our principles, render any such name superfluous. It is only a question of time, and we are quite ready to wait for such a consummation as the union of the two schools.

CLINICAL NOTES ON THE USE OF *CALENDULA* IN THE DISEASES OF WOMEN.*

By R. LUDLAM, M.D.

At the risk of being thought a little old-fashioned, I beg to call the attention of this society to the virtues of a remedy which is not new, but which, in my judgment at least, has been very much neglected. That remedy is the *calendula officinalis*; and my remarks will be limited to its local and general use in some of the diseases of women.

1. *In Endo-cervicitis*.—There are some cases of this disease in which the glands of the uterine neck are chiefly affected. They are chronic and intractable, very exhausting to the patient because of the leucorrhœal flow, and exceedingly difficult of cure by the ordinary means. The essential condition consists in an extension of the inflammation along the lining membrane of the follicles, just as in follicular tonsillitis, of which in some other respects also it is the counterpart.

I am quite confident that the stereotype resort to escharotics in these cases is as unnecessary and as unsatisfactory in its results as it is in follicular tonsillitis. And, what is equally true is, that the *calendula* is quite as useful locally in this form of cervicitis as many of our practitioners have found it to be in the kind of sore throat of which I have spoken.

I very often prescribe its internal use while it is being applied locally. Indeed, I am satisfied from an ample

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